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Little Month  
of St. Joseph



BOYLESVE







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**S A I N T   J O S E P H .**



**Little Month of Saint Joseph.**

**SAINT JOSEPH,**

ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL.

BY THE

REVEREND FATHER MARIN DE BOYLESVE, S.J.

**Meditations and Anecdotes for each Day  
of the Month of Saint Joseph.**

*WITH PRAYERS AND DEVOTIONS.*

TRANSLATED BY MRS. EDWARD HAZELAND.

**BURNS AND OATES.**

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## PREFACE.

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THE most reliable foundation for the glory and veneration due to Saint Joseph is to be found within the pages of the Gospel. Thirty-three texts, comprising all that the New Testament narrative reveals concerning Saint Joseph, have been selected by us as the groundwork of a course of short practical Meditations inciting to the imitation of the virtues of the Saint, *as recorded in the Gospel*. These thirty-three chosen texts will teach the faithful how best to honour the great Patron of the Church, and the reasons for placing unlimited confidence in his protection.

This little manual contains a daily exercise for the Month of Saint Joseph; but devotion to this PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH should not be confined to one month, and as each Wednesday throughout

the year has for a long time been dedicated to St. Joseph, a good way of carrying out this devotion might be to take for the subject of our Meditation some of the mysteries of the life of this great Saint as we find them recorded in the Gospel.

Of the three Feasts in honour of Saint Joseph, the chief one is that celebrated on the 19th of March. The second in order is that of the Patronage, fixed for the Third Sunday after Easter; and the third, common to Our Lady and her chaste Spouse, falls on January 23d, and bears the name of *Feast of the Espousals of the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph*.

Three of the daily readings would form a Meditation for each day of the Novenas preceding these Feasts, and each Meditation might be concluded by the recitation of the prayers authorised to be used in honour of the Saint, and which will be found at the end of this little book, in company with other devotions to the august Spouse of the Mother of our Lord.

# SAINT JOSEPH, ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL.



## 1st Meditation.

“And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called the Christ.”—SAINT MATTHEW i. 16.

Descendant of the kings of Judah, Spouse of the Mother of God, foster-father of Jesus, representative also of the Eternal Father, Joseph holds, next to Mary, the highest rank to which a mere creature can be exalted; and such a man is passed unnoticed. No trait is cited, no word uttered, that can win him a place in the annals of the world. He is named but in conjunction with Jesus and Mary, and that only so far as their interests require.

How vain all earthly glory! Much is said of those who desire but oblivion, and true merit remains ignored.



Let the world despise us, its contempt pass unheeded, and, far from feeling surprise, let us rejoice at being overlooked. The world has forgotten so many! We will repay oblivion by oblivion!

*Watchword.* — Heed neither the esteem nor the contempt of the world.

### 1. *Saint Joseph's Place in Heaven.*

An artist was commissioned by Pius IX. to paint a picture of the proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. When the sketch was submitted for approval, the sovereign pontiff, looking at it, exclaimed: "And Saint Joseph, where is he?" The artist pointed to a group lost in the clouds, replying: "That is the spot I reserve for him." "No," replied the Holy Father, pointing to a place at our Saviour's side; "there, and only there, must he be placed; for surely that is his post in heaven."

---

## 2d Meditation.

“And in the sixth month, the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David : and the virgin’s name was Mary.”—SAINT LUKE i. 26, 27.

This son of David, the descendant of kings, is in the world’s sight nought but a simple workman, obliged to gain his bread by the sweat of his brow.

When God proposes working out some grand design, He renders lowly all the surroundings of the person whose greatness He intends to manifest. That masterpiece of the Divine Wisdom, Power and Love, the Incarnation, was to be divested of all earthly splendour ; therefore, during three hundred years the house of David was lost sight of among the other families of Judah. Zerubbabel is the last king who plays any part in history. The branch to which Joseph belonged fell into indigence, and as there is nothing so efficacious as poverty to ensure the world’s neglect, Joseph was in a fit position to be associated in the Divine work.

#### 14 LITTLE MONTH OF SAINT JOSEPH.

When God abases and humbles you ; when He deprives you of the means of action, of the elements of success ; when He appears to frustrate and annihilate your every effort, do not be alarmed. In this very way He is about to effect, by you and in you, some great work. Men despise, or worse still, they forget you, and know you no more. This is the moment awaited by God. Now, will the Divine Power (such is the meaning of the name Gabriel) descend to visit you, and, as Mary and Joseph of old, so you too are about to be summoned to concur in the carrying on of the Divine work, in the development of the Incarnation, in the perfecting of the mysterious Body of Christ, in the extension of the Church, and the reign of Jesus.

*Watchword.*—Desire to be ignored, and to ignore oneself.

#### 2. *Devotion to Saint Joseph counselled by our Lady.*

Father P. Balthazar Alvarez being sick, a religious presented him with an image of Saint Joseph, exhorting him to commend himself to the holy Patriarch. "You

are right," replied the Father; "that is precisely what the Blessed Virgin counselled me to do." On hearing these words, a brother who had accompanied Father Alvarez in his journey to Rome, remembered that on quitting the Holy House of Loretto, the Father told him that he had just experienced a deep feeling of devotion to Saint Joseph. It is possible that was the moment when Our Lady exhorted the Father to confidence in her Holy Spouse.

---

### 3d Meditation.

"When Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."—SAINT MATTHEW i. 18.

Mary was confided to Saint Joseph as a precious deposit. The mission of this just man was to shield the virginity of Mary. Meanwhile the work of the Holy Ghost is accomplished.

Let us simply observe our rule of life, fulfil the duties of our calling, and God meanwhile will work out great things, accomplishing His designs, and inasmuch as we have been faithful to the mission in-

trusted to our care, God will associate us with Himself in the work that otherwise He would effect without our aid.

Joseph covers, so to speak, the Divine work; and thus God makes use of our words and example to give birth to Jesus in the hearts of men, whilst in reality it is His grace that effects these wonders.

### 3. *Dignity of Saint Joseph.*

On the Feast of the Annunciation Saint Gertrude beheld in vision all the saints of heaven bend the head each time the choir uttered the name of Joseph; they exchanged glances, testifying their happiness at the glory Saint Joseph enjoys in heaven, and the honour rendered to him on earth.

---

### 4th Meditation.

“Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately.”—SAINT MATTHEW i. 19.

The Holy Ghost proclaims Joseph a just man, and yet as being loth to accuse Mary;

therefore the holy Patriarch must have been convinced of the perfect innocence of his angelic spouse, if not so, Joseph's resolve would have been contrary to the law and therefore to justice also.

Why, then, does Joseph meditate separation from Mary? It is doubtless that he deems himself unworthy of remaining with her in whom such mysteries were being enacted. What anxiety must not he have suffered in reconciling obedience to the law, with the respect due to the virtue of Mary? Admire the wisdom of this just man, who finds in withdrawing himself a way of conciliation.

However strong the external evidence against our neighbour—let us beware of judging him—I reflect what regret it would have caused Saint Joseph had he allowed himself to judge according to appearances.

Do you wish to spare yourself and your brethren sorrow—too often irreparable—judge not your neighbour, speak not and act not against his interests, save in case of publicity, of certainty, or of necessity.

*Watchword.*—Judge, not and you shall not be judged.

*4. Saint Joseph and the Two Professors.*

During the time that Father Lallemand was rector of the college at Bourges, as the Feast of Saint Joseph drew near the Rev. Father sent for two young professors, and promised to obtain for them any grace they desired, provided that they would exhort their pupils to devotion towards Saint Joseph. The two religious gladly consented to the proposal, and their efforts were so successful that on the day of the Feast all their pupils received Holy Communion. The same day the two professors went to the rector, and each of them privately named the grace he desired. The first, the eminent Father Nouet, entreated the privilege of speaking and writing worthily of our Saviour. We do not know the favour desired by the other, we only know that it was obtained. As for Father Nouet, he, on the morrow of the Feast, returned to the rector, saying that he had changed his mind, as, on reflection, he thought it his duty to ask for some grace more necessary to his own perfection. The rector replied that it was too late now, for

Saint Joseph had already granted the favour at first requested.

---

### 5th Meditation.

“While Joseph thought on these things, behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep.”—SAINT MATTHEW i. 20.

What honour for Saint Joseph thus to be deemed worthy of retaining her as spouse, who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, had become the Mother of God!

We must admit that he had, by his prudence and discretion, proved himself worthy of the high mission intrusted to him. In similar circumstances how many would by their precipitation have ruined all! Joseph is lord of his own mind and heart. He takes time to reflect: *Hæc autem eo cogitante.*

Let us think before we act, think before we speak, think even before pronouncing interiorly, especially when our neighbour's honour is concerned. Let us wait for light from above, and when we have used all possible means, and applied all the resources of our mind and will, suddenly,



and at the very moment when we least expect it, God will send His angel: *Hæc autem eo cogitante, ecce angelus Domini apparuit in somnis ei.* During sleep, in the hours of night, at the moment when we end our research, or at the moment when all is dark around, light will appear, inspiration will arrive, and the Divine Will be declared.

*Watchword.*—Reflect before you speak or act.

#### 5. *Patronage of Saint Joseph.*

Saint Theresa relates that at the Feast of the Assumption Saint Joseph appeared and covered her with a mantle of brilliant whiteness, revealing to her at the same time, that she was justified from all her sins, and that he would obtain for her all the favours she desired.

Saint Theresa had dedicated the greater part of her convents to Saint Joseph, but after her decease, some of these houses were placed under her protection. The saint appeared to one of the religious and gave her this strict order: Tell the Father Provincial to remove my name from the

houses and restore to them that of Saint Joseph.

---

### 6th Meditation.

“Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”—SAINT MATTHEW i. 20.

Son of David, descendant of the Prophet-King; of him who in vision beheld the eternal reign of the Messiah. Joseph, let the recollection of thy origin recall to thee the wondrous things that shall be effected in thy line! The prediction of thy ancestor is about to be accomplished in the womb of the Virgin of Jesse, co-descendant with thee of the line of David, the Holy Virgin whose fate is linked with thine! Fear not, thou son of David, to remain with thy spouse, Virgin Daughter of David's royal line! Thou art worthy of her, and to thee is confided that sacred deposit, the divine treasure of her virginity! True, it is by the operation of the Holy Ghost that she has become a mother, but she ceases not to be thy spouse. She and her Son

are thine! An orphan here below, the Son of the Most High, and Mary's Son needs an earthly father, this father thou shalt be, for it is thy right: *Noli timere accipere Mariam conjugem tuam.*

Is anxiety at its climax, difficulty insuperable, do thou thy best. Reflect, seek for a way to extricate thyself and then resolve: *Hæc autem eo cogitante;* but act with calmness, like Joseph, in spite of anxiety, sleep thou in peace in the arms of a living Providence. The night of trial shall usher in a brilliant day. You fell asleep in sorrow, you shall awake in joy!

*Watchword.*—Hope ever; God is faithful.

#### 6. *Saint Joseph and Saint Ignatius.*

Saint Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus, was ever mindful of Saint Joseph. In his "Exercises" he proposes the Saint to our consideration in relation to our Lord's hidden life. In his oratory was an image of Saint Joseph, before which he loved to pray, and when any extraordinary difficulty occurred, it was on this spot that Saint Ignatius put it into writing, in order to obtain a happy solution.

## 7th Meditation.

“Mary shall bring forth a son ; and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”—SAINT MATTHEW i. 21.

Now Joseph comprehends the high degree of honour to which union with Mary admits him. He is chosen as father to Mary’s Son, the Son of God, and the honour will be his of bestowing on the Divine Child the admirable name of JESUS, a name which in itself designates all that He is, and all that He will be !

No longer let us murmur at Joseph’s silence. We know but one word that issued from his lips, but by this one word Joseph has revealed more than all the Prophets of the Old, and as much as the Apostles and Doctors of the New Testament : for Joseph has named JESUS.

The prophets foretold what Messiah would do and say, but none declared His name ; but this name in itself reveals all that Jesus is, all that Jesus will be. The Apostles can tell us no more than this. If they traverse the world, it is to preach the

name of Jesus ; if they create astonishment by their miracles, it is because they work them in the name of Jesus ; whether they suffer, whether they die, it is for the name of Jesus.

The Doctors speak and write but to explain, propagate, and defend the Faith in the name of Jesus ; and Saint Bernard exclaims, as did Saint Paul, that he knows but one thing, but one word—Jesus. All the Doctors and all the Apostles say the same.

For ourselves, let there be fewer words, fewer ideas. One suffices. With Joseph let us seek but Jesus, think but Jesus, speak but Jesus, serve but Jesus, act but for Jesus, and then shall we never be separated from Jesus.

*Watchword.* — Invoke incessantly the Holy Name of Jesus.

### 7. *The Three Great Names.*

Father Gaspard Bon began and ended all his questions, and all his replies, by invoking the holy names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and expired uttering these sacred names, which are in themselves a pledge of salvation.

## 8th Meditation.

“And Joseph, rising up from sleep, did as the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife.”—SAINT MATTHEW i. 24.

Here two things in the conduct of Joseph strike me forcibly—its simplicity and its promptitude. The Angel has spoken: instantly, without question or hesitation, Joseph obeys: *Fecit sicut præcepit*. Admirable simplicity! How this straightforwardness bears away the palm from human prudence, with its many calculations—its sinuosities and its deliberations. True, it is permissible to hesitate, and as already said, we must suspend our judgment and reflect carefully when we are in doubt: *Hæc eo cogitante*; but when once God has spoken, whether by the voice of Angel or of man, by a ray of human intelligence or a feeling of the heart, arise and act: *Ex surgens fecit sicut præcepit*. In the hour of anguish let silence be our wisdom, and the voice of God our light; suddenly the darkness shall be dispelled—all obstacles will disappear; our desires

and our designs will be realised, and that far beyond our fondest expectations.

*Watchword.*—What it is your duty to do, do it resolutely, promptly, and simply.

### 8. *Saint Joseph and Saint Francis de Sales.*

Saint Francis de Sales being at Lyons on the Feast of Saint Joseph, preached at the Carmelites. As soon as the sermon was ended, the Superior of the Jesuits came to the Saint and entreated him to preach at their church, dedicated to Saint Joseph. "I confess," replied the amiable Prelate, "that two sermons a day are rather beyond my powers ; still, for love of Saint Joseph, I will do my best." He did so, and it was well seen that Saint Joseph was his saint of predilection. The Superior was about to thank him when the Prelate exclaimed : " But, Father, do you not perceive how entirely I am devoted to Saint Joseph ? "

This same Father being with the good Bishop one day previous to his death, asked permission to make use of his breviary, and remarked that in it there was but one picture, that of Saint Joseph.

## 9th Meditation.

“And Joseph knew not Mary till she had brought forth her first-born Son, and he called His name Jesus.”—SAINT MATTHEW i. 25.

Jesus is called first-born of Mary, because at the foot of the Cross the Immaculate Virgin was to become the Mother of the human race—these represented in the person of Saint John. Joseph and Mary led the life of angels, and towards the Divine Child Saint Joseph exercised all the rights and fulfilled all the duties and offices of father.

In the first place, it is he who has the honour of naming Mary's Son—an honour, we have said, that exalts Joseph far above Patriarchs, Apostles, and Doctors. Now, if the name of Jesus is the only word that we have from the lips of Joseph, this single word reveals the one thought which filled the mind, heart, and life of Saint Joseph.

Great Saint, obtain for me this one favour—to know Jesus, and to know but Jesus. I shall do this, if Jesus, and Jesus alone, is first in my mind and heart, on



my lips and in my hands, that is to say, first in my thoughts and my affections, in my words and in my actions. May it be my one ambition, my sole happiness and glory to study Jesus and His Gospel, to serve Jesus and His Church !

*Watchword.*—You are a Christian : be proud of this name.

### 9. *Joseph and the Infant Jesus.*

Yolande of Silva, of the Order of Saint Dominic, had an especial veneration for Saint Joseph, because he had the happiness of hearing the cries, of the Infant JESUS, of beholding Him during the days of His infancy, of carrying Him, of caressing and fondling Him with loving reverence.

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### 10th Meditation.

“And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city.”—SAINT LUKE ii. 1, 3.

Joseph, in virtue of his royal descent, should have commanded, he obeys ; his

heritage was a throne, and yet among the lowly is his home !

True greatness and liberty are independent of social position. Many a one appears to hold a higher rank than his brethren, and is in reality but the puppet of those whom in semblance and fancy he commands. He ranks as first, and is but last and lowest of all. In the most holy position one may be as great, as free, as ever was monarch on his throne !

In the sight of God and of the angels, Joseph fills the highest and most regal position in the world. Augustus governs Rome, and through Rome the world. Joseph rules but one family, commands but two subjects ; but this family is comprised of Jesus and Mary—Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and Jesus, God and King over all the Cæsars and nations of the world !

Do you aspire to be great and free ? To possess real authority and lasting influence over men ? Humble yourself and obey. God and man resist the proud. Give way to others and cede in all things where truth and justice demand not the contrary. Thus and thus only will you be found

strong and free when called on to defend the interests of God and of your neighbour.

*Watchword.*—Conceal your greatness.

10. *Saint Joseph's Power revealed by Our Lady.*

“My daughter,” said the Blessed Virgin to one of her faithful clients, “words fail to reveal the eminent sanctity of Saint Joseph. Only in heaven will this deep and admirable mystery be fathomed. At the Judgment Day numbers of the lost will bitterly lament having slighted and neglected so powerful a protector. The world ignores the greatness of the prerogatives bestowed by God on my holy spouse. Seek his intercession in every hour of need, and strive to augment the number of his clients. God grants on earth all that my spouse demands in heaven.

---

11th Meditation.

“And Joseph went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David.”—  
SAINT LUKE ii. 4.

The journey was trying to Mary, and hardly less so to Saint Joseph, to whom fell all the anxiety and fatigue of seeking a shelter, and to whom all the humiliating refusals were addressed. Bethlehem is David's city, but no shelter will David's son find there for David's daughter, Mary, Mother of the King of kings! Not a murmur is uttered, no cloud o'ershadows the peace of Joseph's soul or the even serenity of his brow.

We can readily picture the smile with which Joseph's utterance is received, when he claims to be enrolled as a descendant of the house of David! If Cæsar has aught to fear, the danger will not proceed from this scion of Judah's royal line!

And yet, who at this moment reigns in Rome, and from Rome sways the world? Where is Cæsar? Vanished, together with his empire, in order to give place to the Vicegerent of Him whom Bethlehem rejected, and whom one of Cæsar's servants inscribed among the lowliest of his master's subjects. Let us beware of judging according to outward appearance, or we too might have despised Joseph, the spouse of

Mary, of Mary, Mother of Jesus, King of kings. Eternal Word—very God and very man.

Let us not blush to appear poor and lowly; the world metes out its esteem and its contempt according to outward semblance; it falls prostrate at the feet of a poor miserable wretch, provided he wears a crown, and disdains true greatness, if greatness wears the livery of the poor.

We say again, and cannot too often reiterate: despise the world's contempt; more, if possible, than its esteem and honours; then, and only then, will you possess true liberty, and only then will you be truly great.

*Watchword.*—Appear less than you really are.

### 11. *The Venerable de la Salle and Saint Joseph.*

The Venerable de la Salle placed his institution under the patronage of Saint Joseph, and daily recited the litanies of the Saint, recommending his brethren to do so likewise, in order that Saint Joseph's tender care of the Infant Jesus might

serve as a model to them in bringing up the children intrusted to their care. The Saint proved how dear the Venerable Father was to his heart ; when he fell sick, his strength returned on the eve of Saint Joseph's Day, and he was able to say Mass, his last, on the morning of the Feast. His health appeared to have been given back but for that purpose, for he soon experienced a relapse, and, in a few days, fell asleep in the Lord.

---

### 12th Meditation.

“ And they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant Jesus lying in a manger.”—SAINT LUKE .  
ii. 16.

Contemplate Saint Joseph at the foot of the Crib. How unspeakable his bliss ! The Divine Child gazes smilingly at him, and one such look suffices to obliterate all anxiety.

For Joseph, the past and future are effaced ; he lives but in the present, and enjoys celestial peace.

So in our lives there are times of extraordinary peace and joy, and the soul listens,

breathes, enjoys, and possesses happiness in a manner so spiritual as to be inexpressible by human tongue. Such was the happiness of Saint Joseph in the presence of the new-born Jesus. He adores in silence, and his silence is one of awe. Is this the Word by Whom all things were created? by Whom all things subsist?—Silence of admiration! The Word is made Flesh, and we have beheld His glory! His birth reveals His love; angels have sung His greatness; the star announces His power; and ere long His words will reveal His wisdom and His deeds show forth His might.—Silence of joy! This stable, this crib, contain Him Who is the glory of heaven and of the heavenly hosts.—Silence of grief! He has come to His own, and His own have received Him not. For the Son of David, for the Son of God, no place is found in Bethlehem!

The heart needs but Jesus. In Him are all treasures, joys, and honours.

Look at Mary and Joseph. Around them is nought but poverty, suffering, and humiliation. What matter? They are happy: Jesus is there!

*Watchword.*—In thought and affection live with Jesus.

### 12. *Feast of Saint Joseph in Canada.*

On the Eve of Saint Joseph, 1637, the French flag was hoisted in Quebec, amid the roar of cannon. The salutes of fireworks so astonished the natives that they exclaimed: "Saint Joseph must indeed be a very great personage, for in his honour night is turned to day!" On the morrow the churches were crowded, as at Easter, and every one blessed God for having given, as patron to New France, that chosen one who during life was the protector and adopted father of the Incarnate Word.

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### 13th Meditation.

"And after the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord."—SAINT LUKE ii. 22.

Here we have proof of Joseph's legal right over the Son of Mary. With Mary he



shares the merit and honour of presenting the Infant Jesus to the Eternal Father.

True, Jesus has no other Father than the One of Whom He will so often speak as "My Heavenly Father," or simply "My Father;" and yet Jesus belongs to Joseph. He who possesses the tree has a right to the fruit. The rights of Joseph over Mary ensure him equal rights over Jesus, and the Gospel shows us Joseph and Mary acting in concert, and both presenting the Infant Jesus. They carried Him: *tulerunt*; they presented Him: *ut sisterent*. It is not undesignedly that the sacred historian here employs the plural.

Let us learn to make good use of God's gifts. Joseph is associated with Mary in her rights over Jesus. Jesus belongs to Joseph even as He belongs to Mary. Like Mary and with Mary Joseph offers to God that which he has received from God. "According to the law:" *secundum legem Moysi*. . . . Now, not only the law of Moses, but the law of nature, the law of gratitude, and, I must add, the law of our own self-interest, all teach us the solemn obligation we are under of rendering

God homage for the gifts received from Him.

Intelligence, will, health, strength, eye, ear, tongue, hand, soul and body, life, fortune, power, are all so many gifts, to be consecrated to the glory and service of God, of Him who is so liberal in the gifts bestowed on you now, and the glory with which He will reward the generosity of your offering.

*Watchword.*—Offer to God all you are, all that you have.

### 13. *Saint Joseph and France in the Seventeenth Century.*

In 1661 Louis XIV., at the urgent entreaty of two queens, expressed by letters royal his desire that the Feast of Saint Joseph should be declared a Day of Obligation. The Bishops by their mandates, and the High Courts by their decrees, deferred to the royal wish, which was carried out on the 19th of March of the same year. Bossuet preached his second panegyric on Saint Joseph, and ended it by thanking the King for his desire to render increased honour to the memory of the Saint.

## 14th Meditation.

“And to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.”—SAINT LUKE ii. 24.

Descendant of the kings of Judah, Joseph is reduced to the offering of the poor; but this causes him no shame, he esteems himself richer than the richest kings, richer than even David or Solomon in all their glory, for Joseph possesses Jesus. Though poor in this world's goods he sees no disgrace in that. For himself, is not he the spouse of Mary and the adopted Father of Jesus? And Mary? she is the Mother of Jesus. And the Child? That very Son of David, whose reign shall know no limit, no end, and whose throne shall be eternal!

What is there humiliating in poverty or glorious in riches? If I am poor it is either because I will it or God wills it, and this consciousness frees me from the fetters which turn man into a slave to gold. Shall I then blush at a poverty that assures me independence, liberty, nobility, and grandeur! No, it shall not be thus. I will desire not only to be but to

appear poor, for I wish to be like Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

*Watchword.*—Let your requirements be less each day.

#### 14. *Saint Joseph and Bossuet.*

In 1657 Bossuet preached in Saint Joseph's honour a sermon so beautiful that he was called on to repeat it two years later in the presence of the Queen-mother. It was that sermon which has for text : *Depositum custodi.* On the 19th of March 1661 Anne of Austria desired again to listen to the great orator, who, applying to Saint Joseph the words addressed to David when Samuel came to anoint him king of Israel, preached from this text : *Quæsit sibi Deus virum juxta cor suum*—"God has sought for Himself a man after His own heart."

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#### 15th Meditation.

"And when His parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law."—SAINT LUKE ii. 27.

His parents : *Parentes ejus.* Thus again does the Holy Ghost plainly recognise and

indicate Saint Joseph as the adopted father of Jesus. What has he done to merit so signal a share in the work of the world's redemption? It is hinted at in the presentation. Many fancy that rank dispenses from the observance of the ordinary precepts of life, and greatness consists in imagining oneself superior to all rule. Joseph thinks otherwise. Here is a law that concerns not the Holy Trinity, for what purification can she need, who, as Virgin-Mother, sanctifies by her mere presence? What stain can she have contracted in conceiving in her chaste womb and in giving birth to the Holy One: *Quod nascetur ex te sanctum*. Joseph and Mary know but one law, and on the day appointed they present themselves in the temple to take part in a ceremony which, in the eyes of man, associates Mary with the ordinary mothers of the human race.

Prudence and dignity consists first of all in the simple, regular, and faithful observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, of the rules of our profession, and the duties of our state. Law, rule, such is the expression of God's will

concerning us; and all our wisdom and all our virtue consists in conforming our intelligence and will to the Divine wisdom and goodness as manifested in the Law.

*Watchword.*—Live up to your rule, and you will live to God.

### 15. *Growth of Devotion to Saint Joseph.*

In the brief in which Pius IX. raised the Association of the Children of Saint Joseph into an Arch-Confraternity, the Holy Father speaks thus: “There is nothing we desire so much as to see a daily increase of devotion to Saint Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin.”

A learned and pious religious of the sixteenth century, who, on the testimony of Benedict XIV., has written a most remarkable work on Saint Joseph, in his *Somme* expresses himself thus with regard to the gifts bestowed on Saint Joseph:—

“In Eastern countries the Holy Ghost has filled men’s hearts with the desire of rendering great honour to Saint Joseph; and we are sure that this devotion will obtain for us, by the merits and intercession of this glorious Patriarch, the with-

drawal of many of the dangers by which the Church is assailed, and for the faithful an abundance of grace.”

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### 16th Meditation.

“And His father and mother were wondering at these things which were spoken concerning Him.”—SAINT LUKE ii. 33.

Yet again once more does the Holy Ghost recognise and indicate Saint Joseph as the adopted father of Jesus. Whence arises the surprise felt by Joseph and Mary at that which is spoken concerning Jesus? Is it because of the great things foretold by Simeon and by Anna? No; they know that Jesus is indeed the Great One: *Hic erit magnus*; and when, in obeying God's command, they gave Him the name of Jesus, they knew that it was a name above all names. That which now seems to cause them wonder is beholding the hidden greatness of the Divine Child acknowledged and revealed by others. They admire and rejoice at the honour that accrues to Jesus.

Let us not envy those who have the happiness to glorify God in a higher degree than ourselves. If you love Jesus and seek His glory, so that He is loved and glorified, whether by your efforts and your labours or by those of others, your joy will be the same.

It is not always those who serve Jesus most openly, by word or pen, who contribute most to His service and glory. Who dare assert that Simeon or Anna had done more for the glory of Jesus than did Mary ? Or that Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, and Doctors have done and suffered more for Jesus than did His Blessed Mother ?

You cannot sever the action of Joseph from that of Mary, for Joseph shared all the anxieties and cares of his spouse ; he it is who nurtured, protected, guided, and tended both the Mother and the Child.

Let us be content to leave brilliant words and deeds to those whom the Holy Ghost inspires. By your incessant desires, your upright, simple, and pure intentions, doing God's will in your respective spheres ; one in the world and amid the embarrassment of business or of a family ; another in



the solitude of the cloister, unknown to man and even to those by whom he is surrounded, feeling that what you are and what you do is of but little value, you may contribute to the glory of Jesus as much, and often more, than missionaries, bishops, preachers, doctors, and than Popes most eminent in word and deed.

*Watchword.*—Seek glory, but let it be the glory of Jesus.

16. *Alms in Honour of Saint Joseph.*

The community of *La Miséricorde*, at Laval, found it necessary to erect some buildings, but funds were wanting. It was the month of March 1844. A Novena was made in honour of Saint Joseph, and a few days after the Superior of the Community, Mother Theresa, received from a lady at Rennes the sum of 7000 francs. The gift was accompanied by a letter stating that the idea of making the offering had entered her mind on Saint Joseph's Day.

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## 17th Meditation.

“And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, into their city Nazareth.”—SAINT LUKE ii. 39.

Joseph and Mary leave their home only to accomplish the precept of the law; that duty fulfilled, they return to their solitude.

Let us also love the calm and tranquillity of a retired life, and only appear in the world when duty or charity demand; but when summoned by duty, let us accomplish with exactitude and fidelity all that charity, the glory of God, and the good of our neighbour require. So Mary and Joseph return to Nazareth, only when they have fully accomplished all that the law demanded: *Et ut perficerent omnia secundum legem Domini*. When we have effected any good, we are sometimes tempted to cling to the work that has succeeded so well, and to the persons whom we have benefited. Let us reject this illusion, and escape from the praise and thanks of men. Return to our hidden life, court oblivion,

and remain in our retirement until called to quit it by the manifestation of the Divine will or the necessities of our neighbour.

*Watchword.*—To do good, and to annihilate self.

17. *The Little Sisters of the Poor and Saint Joseph.*

The Little Sisters of the Poor at Roanne owed 2000 francs. The time of payment was at hand, and the cash-box was still empty. True, they daily found sufficient food for their poor, but 2000 francs were not so easy to find. "Saint Joseph alone can rescue us," said the Sisters; "let us commence a Novena." They do so, and deposit their request at the foot of the statue of their patron. Before the close of the Novena, the Superioress was sent for by a stranger who had been taken ill at the hotel. "Sister," said the lady, "have you a chamber to spare for me?"—"Madam," replied the sister, "we receive only poor old men; but I can tell you of a house that will suit you much better than would ours."—"Sister," replied the stranger, "I

suppose you do not refuse alms?"—"They are our only resource," answered the Superioress. The lady then took a purse and presented it to the sister, who, on opening it, was overwhelmed with gratitude to find that it contained just the 2000 francs for which they had petitioned Saint Joseph.

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### 18th Meditation.

"Behold the Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee: For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him."—SAINT MATTHEW ii. 13.

But this is a dream! And on the faith of a nocturnal vision which may prove to be only a delusion, will it be wise to heed the warning and take so strange a course?

This Child is God! and must He have recourse to flight to escape a tyrant's rage?

The vengeance of the angel's message renders the exile yet more appalling: *Et esto ibi usque dum dicam tibi*—remain in Egypt untill I tell thee to return.

But if this vision be indeed from heaven,

what a responsibility even then! At this very moment, perchance, the tyrant's emissaries are at hand, ready to slay the Infant at His Mother's breast.

What step must be taken? Shall he regard the vision as but an idle dream, or at once incur the danger of a hasty flight?

Joseph is as superior to human reasonings as he is to trouble and alarm. In him faith is predominant; but where shall I seek this calmness, so simple and sublime, free from the hesitation of doubt, unmoved by the storm of passion?

Be attentive and obedient to the inspirations with which grace constantly prevents us, then shall we easily discern the true from the false, and neither be misled by vain reasoning nor by the fears of a restless mind.

*Watchword.*—Calmly obey the voice of Divine inspiration.

### 18. *The Lucky Number.*

A young man was about to draw for the conscription. On his way he entered a chapel dedicated to Saint Joseph—*des Champs*, near Laval. "You know," said

he to the Saint, "how I dread military service ; less on account of the hardships and dangers of war than because of the idleness and immorality of the barracks. Here is the number which I desire." Saying this he placed the number on the altar and went his way. At the moment of putting his hand into the urn he invoked Saint Joseph, and withdrew the very number he had named. He hastened to the sanctuary and returned heartfelt thanks to the Saint.

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### 19th Meditation.

"Joseph arose, and took the Child and His Mother by night, and retired into Egypt."—**SAINT MATTHEW ii. 14.**

Admire the promptitude and calmness of this act of obedience : *Qui consurgens.* The Angel has spoken, Joseph arises. He commands in as straightforward and simple a manner as he obeys—he uses no subterfuge with regard to many, but takes the Infant and His Mother : *Accipit puerum et matrem ejus*—and at once they set forth. *Nocte* : that very night, with-

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out objection, hesitation, or delay, the command of heaven is obeyed.

The world is surprised at the activity of the Saints, at the multiplicity of their works. Let us reflect on the time we lose in resisting the Divine inspirations, the orders of Providence, the claims of duty, and the rights of obedience. If we simply do what God wills, we shall find time for all.

Remark the parallel in the words of the Angel and the conduct of Joseph. The acts of the latter respond word for word to the commands of the former. The Angel has spoken : " Arise," *Surge*, and Joseph arises : *Qui consurgens*. " Take the Child and His Mother," adds the Celestial Messenger, and Joseph takes the Child and His Mother. *Accipe puerum et matrem ejus*;—*Acceptit puerum et matrem ejus*. Again the Angel continues: Flee into Egypt, and Joseph flees into Egypt. *Fuge in Ægyptum*;—*Secessit in Ægyptum*.

Let the rule of your conduct be the Word of God, whether manifested by the voice of those whom He has given you as Superiors, in the Church, in the family, in

your own special sphere, in the rules of your profession, in the inspirations of grace, and the external leadings of Providence, and then your walk will be sure and firm, calm and rapid; all difficulties will vanish, all obstacles disappear.

Behold Saint Joseph, *Secessit in Ægyptum*, he retires into Egypt. The words are so short and simple that at first we dream not of the anxiety, pain, and peril of so long and sudden a journey. But God has spoken, God wills it, therefore nothing is difficult, nothing is impossible.

*Watchword.*—Before obedience all difficulties vanish.

### 19. *The Shipwreck and the Seven Paters and Aves.*

Two Franciscans who had been shipwrecked were clinging to a fragment of timber, where for three days they remained between life and death. At last they recommended themselves to Saint Joseph, and at once a majestic youth appeared and steered them to the shore. On landing, the two religious threw themselves at the feet of their liberator, entreating him to



reveal his name. "I am Joseph, whom you invoked," replied he; "and if you wish to give me pleasure, let no day pass without reciting seven Paters and Aves, in memory of the seven joys and seven dolours of my earthly life." That said, he disappeared, leaving the two religious overwhelmed by gratitude and joy.

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### 20th Meditation.

"And Joseph remained in Egypt until the death of Herod."—SAINT MATTHEW ii. 15.

Another of those words which indicate more than appears at first sight. He was there: *Erat ibi*; but what was his position and how did he live? Picture to yourself a poor artisan all at once transported to a foreign land, where he knows no one, is known of none, is without means, tools, work, or home. Ah! what are the anxieties and inconveniences of Bethlehem compared with the cares and sufferings of Egypt? At Bethlehem they at least knew the extent of their sojourn, it was but for a few days; but of their stay in Egypt

they know nought, neither can they even conjecture the duration of their exile.

“Remain there,” said the Angel, “until I return.” In face of a future so uncertain, it is vain to think of any permanent abode ; and yet, with all the inconveniences inseparable from a temporary sojourn, that sojourn will last for years.

Who can tell the sadness experienced by the Holy Family at sight of the idolatry of Egypt? In presence of this sorrow all the privations of exile grow pale and vanish. God ignored, God offended, souls lost, ah ! what grief to the heart of Jesus, and therefore to the hearts of Mary and Joseph also !

The Holy Family in Egypt is a type of the Church in the world. The Church is there : the Pope is there : *Et erat ibi*, always threatened by Herod and awaiting the tyrant's death : *Usque ad obitum Herodis*.

Such, too, is the situation of those persons and societies who dedicate themselves to God's service. In the ages of faith they built for the future ; but now times are changed. A work is commenced, and to-morrow the breath of Revolution

or a tyrant's caprice stays your projects or destroys your undertaking. Labour on in spite of this, and carry on the works God has inspired you to commence. But trust not to man, but depend on God alone.

*Watchword.*—Work, but be ready to quit it at the first intimation that such is God's will.

### 20. *The Deserted Pilgrims.*

Cecile Portaro and a few of her companions made a pilgrimage to *Notre-Dame-de-Drépane*, in Sicily. The boat which should have brought them back started without them, and they were left ashore, far from Palermo, and without shelter for the night. Great was the consternation of the little band. Cecile invoked Saint Joseph, and almost immediately, an old man and child arrived ; the former, touched by the anxiety of the holy maidens, offered to show them the way, and the child took charge of their scanty baggage. "Good man," said Cecile, "surely Saint Joseph has sent you ; but we have a long way to go." "Where to ?" replied the old man. "To Palermo, Rue Saint Joseph." "That

is my street," rejoined the old man, and they continued their route. As soon as the little caravan had arrived at the place of their destination, the old man set down the luggage. The travellers turned round to thank him, but both old man and child had vanished, and Cecile felt sure they could be no others than Saint Joseph and the Infant Jesus.

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### 21st Meditation.

"But when Herod was dead, behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, Saying: Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead that sought the life of the Child."  
—SAINT MATTHEW ii. 19, 20.

Days, weeks, months, and years pass, and the expected Angel does not reappear. What if there has been some illusion? Will it not be wise to settle definitely in Egypt? Doubtless the Jews, then so numerous in that land, often said to Joseph: Follow our example; we, like you, have given up our country, and the holy city of David; like you, our hearts turn inces-

santly towards the Temple of our God ; but, nevertheless, we have made our home in this friendly land.

Joseph lives on from day to day, relying on the Angel's promise, and awaiting his return.

Let us beware of clinging too fondly to any place, employment, or special occupation. Let us hold ourselves ready to quit all, so soon as by the voice of an angel, visible or invisible—I mean, by the voice of a superior, by the force of circumstances, or by secret inspiration, we shall be called to another sphere and another work.

You have conceived such and such a project, undertaken a certain work, embraced a certain state, cultivated a certain virtue, demanded a certain grace, impelled by an inspiration that you deemed divine. And now years have gone by and no light from on high has appeared, none of your hopes are realised. Your labours, your efforts, your prayers are fruitless ; you begin to fear lest you have been the victim of an illusion or have taken for inspiration what was but a dream.

Ah no, it was no dream ! At the

moment when you least expect it, and when, like a second Tobias, you look but for death, the promised grace will be bestowed, light will come, and the star shall shine for you as it shone for the Magi, the Angel will return and announce that Herod is no more, that the obstacle which has hitherto rendered your project futile has now disappeared. All that was foreshown you is accomplished.

*Watchword.*—Cease not work, success will come in God's good time.

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### 22d Meditation.

“And Joseph arose, and took the Child and His Mother, and came into Israel.”—SAINT MATTHEW ii. 12.

Here is another proof of Joseph's obedience. The Angel has spoken, and Joseph instantly complies with prompt and unquestioning obedience.

Each word of the narrative corresponds to some part of the Angel's message. It is with the return as with the departure; perfect conformity in the conduct of Joseph to the commands of the Angel. *Surge.*

*Qui consurgens.* Arise. Joseph arises.—  
*Accipe puerum et matrem ejus.* *Accipit*  
*puerum et matrem ejus.* Take the Child  
 and His Mother. He takes the Child and  
 His Mother.—*Vade in terram Israel.* *Et*  
*venit in terram Israel.* Go into the land of  
 Israel. And he goes to the land of Israel.

This last fact is recorded in few words, but the journey into Egypt was full of trouble and hardship. Few words suffice to record the latter fact, and yet if the Flight into Egypt was marked by pain and hardship, the Return must have been doubly so. Whether the Holy Family remained in Egypt for three or, as some say, seven years, so long a journey must have been equally trying to a child who, if but three years of age, was too feeble to walk and too heavy to be carried for any length of time, and who, if as old as seven, would still be incapable of travelling fast or far.

Let us follow Joseph on this painful journey. His devotedness is inexhaustible, and his patience and serenity are equally so. Forgetful of self, he thinks only of the Mother and the Child : *Accipit puerum et matrem ejus.* The way was long, and

seemed interminable, but it ends at last :  
*Et venit in terram Israel.*

If Joseph is the protector and patron of those who are in difficulty, he is also their example, for, having experienced all kinds of embarrassment, he knows how to be compassionate. Let us then have recourse to him whenever we have obstacles to encounter or difficulties that appear insurmountable.

*Quod possibilitas nostra non obtinet.* It is the Church herself who bids us, in such cases, have recourse to the Holy Patriarch. Following his example, let us persevere on our way, and our goal will be attained !

In face of impossibilities, do what you can and God will do the rest.

## 22. *The Chapel of the Little Sisters of the Poor.*

Two travellers from Paris, husband and wife, arrived at the Noviciate of the Little Sisters of the Poor at La Tour. They were deeply moved by the welcome they received and by the poverty that reigned in the House. The chapel struck them most forcibly ; it was too small even to hold the



novices, but it contained a small statue of Saint Joseph, to whom the Sisters had recourse for the funds necessary to construct a more convenient edifice. The travellers had just paid their devotions at the shrine of the Saint, when one of them said to the other : “ While kneeling here an idea has struck me.”—“ And me also.”—“ We are rich.”—“ That is true.”—“ We have no children.”—“ Alas ! none.”—“ What if we build on this spot a chapel in honour of Saint Joseph ? ”—“ The same thought has struck me.” The idea was carried out, and at the present day, thanks to the generosity of M. and Mme. Féburier, the Little Sisters of La Tour possess a beautiful church.

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### 23d Meditation.

“ But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither : and being warned in sleep, retired into the quarters of Galilee.”—SAINT MATTHEW ii. 22.

Simplicity does not exclude prudence. He who has said, “ Be harmless as the

dove," has also said, "Be wise as the serpent." Faith does not dispense from the use of reason. God does not reveal everything ; and if He has endowed us with intelligence, it is that we may use it. When God speaks, whether by voice of His Angels, by His Church, or by the voice of a Superior, then the part of reason is to believe and obey. On the points where the Divine Will is not revealed, then we must have recourse to the light of reason. Obedience must no longer be blind but clear-sighted. Thus was it with Saint Joseph. He learns that Archelaus reigns in Herod's stead, and in his simplicity and rectitude deems that the son may be no better than the father, and fears to enter a country under the jurisdiction of this prince.

There are persons who criticise, blame, and condemn everything ; others who approve, excuse, and justify everything. The former lack charity, the latter are wanting in prudence ; the former lack kindness of heart, and the latter are wanting in intelligence. It is true that our Lord has said, "Judge not," but Saint Paul has said, "The spiritual man judges all things." The dis-

ciple, inspired by the Holy Ghost, cannot contradict his Master.

Beware of judging rashly ; beware of the spirit of criticism, for it is satanic and diabolical ; but learn to discern the true from the false, good from evil, the wolf from the sheep, the true prophet from the false one,—if not, you will betray faith, conscience, and Jesus into the hands of the false friend, the sophist, and the politician.

After deliberate reflection, Joseph still hesitates as to what step to take, when the Angel returns, and a heavenly command terminates his suspense.

Though God only helps him who helps himself, we must trust far less to our own efforts than to Divine assistance. The possible is for us to accomplish ; God will accomplish the rest.

*Watchword.*—In face of difficulty reflect and pray.

### 23. *The Holy Family and the Society of Jesus.*

Three novices of the Society of Jesus, whilst making a pilgrimage, lost their way,

and though exhausted by hunger and fatigue, ceased not to pray and trust to heaven for help. Their hope was realised. They saw a man and woman approach, the latter bearing in her arms a child. "Come with us," said the strangers; "you have lost your way, we shall direct you, but first you must take some refreshment, for you seem exhausted." Saying this they shared their own provisions with the novices.

The repast was delicious, and heightened by the affability of the hosts. The novices, though overwhelmed by astonishment and gratitude, were anxious to know to whom they were indebted for such kind hospitality. Their curiosity was gratified when one of the three strangers said: "We are the founders of the Society of Jesus: *Nos fundavimus Societatem Jesu.*" They then vanished, and the novices then knew that they were the Holy Family.

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## 24th Meditation.

“And coming, He dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets, that He should be called a Nazarite.”—SAINT MATTHEW ii. 23.

Even here on earth we may hope for happiness. But it must be purchased by long and painful trials, and tempered by the expectation of others, not less bitter and not less certain to arrive. Nevertheless, whatever happens, if, like Saint Joseph, you have Jesus and Mary with you, you will be happy. Picture to yourself Saint Joseph in Nazareth. His life is calm, simple, and uniform; laborious, it is true, hard, rough, and never free from solicitude, for to-morrow's bread depends on the labour of to-day. Still sufficient to the day is the evil thereof, and work is sweet when it is for Jesus, and with Jesus that it is done.

Who shall recount the charm of that home in Nazareth? Listen to the questions the Divine Child addresses to His Mother and to His adopted father. Note the wise and modest replies of Mary and

of Saint Joseph, and their sweet satisfaction at sight of the respectful approval with which their words are greeted by the Holy Child.

In these discourses little is said, much is heard ; they listen intently to that inner voice which echoes to the outer word.

Let us seek even here below that calm, peace, and tranquillity which are a foretaste of heaven, and make a paradise of earth. In thoughts and heart let us live with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and there, even amid trials, labour, and care, we shall enjoy that peace which the world cannot give, which the world does not know, that peace which no storm can disturb, and which emanates from the presence of Jesus, of Mary, and of Joseph.

*Watchword.*—Let your life and conversation be with the Holy Family.

24. *Confession made good, thanks to Saint Joseph.*

A young woman, having unhappily broken her vow of chastity, had not the courage to confess it ; and with the profanation of the sacraments, her life became one

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of torment and remorse. She at last resolved to have recourse to Saint Joseph, and during nine days devoutly recited the hymn and prayer to the Saint. The novena ended, her false shame vanished, and, as she expressed herself in a letter to Perè de Barry : “ Far from being painful, her confession was a real happiness.” She adds : “ Convinced by this experience of the power and goodness of Saint Joseph, I resolved to wear his medal night and day, and from that moment I have been enabled to resist every impure temptation, and have received favours so innumerable that I know not how adequately to express my gratitude.”

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### 25th Meditation.

“ And His parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the pasch.”—SAINT LUKE ii. 41.

The Holy Ghost delights in recalling the adoptive paternity of Joseph : *Et ibant Parentes ejus*, his parents. The holy Patriarch is placed in the same rank as the Blessed Virgin, and this because Saint

Joseph's feelings towards Jesus were the feelings of a father, and those of Jesus for Joseph were the affections of a son.

How admirable the simplicity of the Holy Family ! Externally there is nothing remarkable to be discerned—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph fulfil but the ordinary duties of their calling. They do simply what all the faithful observers of the law do ; nothing more and nothing less. In nothing are they to be distinguished from ordinary persons. They neither fall short of nor exceed in the performance of their duty.

How different is our conduct to theirs ! We dream of ideal perfection, multiply our devotions, but neglect the essential practices of religion and the elementary duties of Christian life. We aspire to evangelical counsels and neglect the commandments ! Let us beware of any inspiration that urges us to the accomplishment of anything extraordinary whilst we fail in the courage necessary for the fulfilment of the ordinary duties of life.

First let us faithfully comply with the requirements of the common law : *Ibant per singulos annos*. If God has destined us



for some wonderful mission He will manifest it in His own good time. Neither let us seek occasions of sacrifice ; God will demand that at the fitting time, and make it conduce to His glory and to our own.

*Watchword.*—Fulfil first the ordinary duties of life.

### 25. *Conversion due to Saint Joseph.*

A Christian woman had a daughter whose conduct was truly deplorable. The poor mother never entered the church without prostrating herself before a picture of Saint Joseph, and demanding with tears the conversion of her child. At last the idea entered her mind to present her daughter with a picture of Saint Joseph. She at once seized the opportunity of her daughter's absence and went instantly to her room. On the table was a book. But what a book ! “ Ah ! Saint Joseph,” said the mother, “ forgive me if I place your picture here, but necessity compels me.” The young girl on her return home took up the book to read. “ Why, what is this ?” she exclaimed, “ a picture !” She looked

again, then turned it over and began to read mechanically a prayer printed in verse. Then she burst into tears; threw her bad book into the fire. She was converted.

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### 26th Meditation.

“And when He was twelve years old, they going up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the Feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and His parents knew it not.”—  
SAINT LUKE ii. 42, 43.

And His parents knew it not! Of what were Mary and Joseph thinking?—Of Jesus. Most likely that, in accordance with the usual custom, Joseph was in company of the men and Mary in that of the women. The age of Jesus would admit His travelling with either party. Joseph thought that the Child was with Mary, and Mary imagined Him with Joseph.

Why, then, did the Divine Child take advantage of this circumstance, and cause His parents such poignant grief? First, He wished to afford them an opportunity

of evincing the depth of their love. He Himself will give the second reason.

Often, without fault of ours, Jesus hides Himself from our sight. He leaves us alone ; we remain indifferent to prayer, and void of energy in His service. A vague and indefinable disquietude possesses us. Let us not be cast down. The greatest saints have all, even as Joseph and Mary, passed through the same trial.

*Watchword.*—In the hour of trial, fear not.

### 26. *Conversion due to Saint Joseph.*

A young man who had been to Paris to perfect himself in his trade, returned home, having lost both faith and health. His mother and his sister pray earnestly for his conversion. The month of Saint Joseph arrives, and an oratory is prepared in honour of the Saint. The young free-thinker asks his sister the reason of these preparations. She replies, "It is the month of Saint Joseph, and we are going to pray for your conversion." The youth began to laugh, but remained listening to the reading which formed part of the devo-

tions, then, uncovering his head, he exclaimed, "Ah, my poor sister, how miserable I am! What a wretch I have become, for I no longer know how to pray! Teach me, for I wish to live as a Christian." The wish was soon complied with, and the genuineness of the young man's conversion was evident in the patience with which he endured the acute suffering of a fatal disease, which he accepted in expiation of his faults, and which after a few months conducted him to heaven.

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### 27th Meditation.

"And thinking that He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance." — SAINT LUKE ii. 44.

Joseph and Mary seek for Jesus at first among their friends and acquaintance. This was a natural thing to do, and they were right in hoping to find Him there.

Are you afflicted? Seek consolation among your friends and acquaintance. Nothing is more natural, nothing more reasonable; and therefore, save in case of a

special interposition of Providence, nothing is more in conformity with the divine will. In acting thus you will frequently meet with the consolation of which you stand in need, but not always so, for at times your hopes will be frustrated. God wills us to act in accordance with the rules of human prudence, and to employ all natural means ; then, when we have fulfilled our part, inspiration and light will come to direct us in the right way, and enable us to accomplish our desires.

*Watchword.* — Help yourself, and God will help you.

27. *Saint Joseph and the Gift of Prayer.*

Père de Barry mentions an instance of a young woman who, finding great difficulty in prayer, made a novena to Saint Joseph, and from that time found great consolation in the sacred exercise.

The same father adds : “ I have met with souls so closely united to God that, whatever their occupation, they never lose sight of the divine presence. I have asked, Whence came this grace ? and one and all

have given me the same reply—"We owe it to Saint Joseph."

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### 28th Meditation.

"And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions."—  
SAINT LUKE ii. 45, 46.

Return to Jerusalem, enter the temple, have recourse to prayer, and you will find Jesus. But you must also seek and act. Joseph and Mary return to Jerusalem, but even on their way they do not relax in their search for the Divine Child.

At last they find Him. Ah! with what astonishment is Joseph overwhelmed. He has, by keeping silence, veiled the divinity of Jesus, and now, behold the Divine Child betrays Himself by the surprising wisdom of His questions and His replies.

Such circumstances as these are rare, and must serve as preceding only in obedience to inspiration or a special command,

and then only if the glory of God requires it. Our habitual inclination should be to the quiet and retirement of a hidden life.

As soon as Joseph and Mary appear, Jesus quits His astonished audience and rejoins His mother and His adopted father.

What tongue can tell their joy at hearing again the sweet dear voice of the Divine Child, and beholding His loving gaze! Who shall tell their consolation when they behold Him quit all to join them, thus showing that they were dearer to Him than all aught else on earth!

Let us be persistent in our search, unwearied in our entreaties, then shall we, in answer to our prayers, find Jesus in Jerusalem, in the temple, in the midst of the doctors. He withdraws but for a time, in order to teach and prove us.

*Watchword.*—To action, join prayer.

### 28. *Saint Joseph and Prayer.*

A poor religious was unable to meditate without being assailed by the most violent distractions. She had recourse to Saint Joseph, and her troubles ceased. Whenever she contemplated the perfections of

the holy patriarch, she was lost in admiration, her slightest wish was granted ; for instance, did she desire to rise earlier than usual, she had only to ask Saint Joseph's help, and she would awake at the desired time.

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### 29th Meditation.

“ And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers. And seeing Him they wondered. And His Mother said to Him : Son, why hast Thou done so to us ? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.”  
—SAINT LUKE ii. 47, 48.

Joseph is here recognised by Mary as being the adopted father of Jesus, and by His silence Jesus acknowledges him as father, who exercises all the authority and undertakes all the cares of the parental office. Joseph shares all Mary's grief, wonder, and joy. The hour of trial is over, and consolation has arrived, a consolation mingled with wondering admiration at the way in which God has made trial and affliction redound to His glory and that of His tried ones. The joy is tempered by



some admixture of austerity. It would almost seem as if Jesus reproached Mary and Joseph for their tender solicitude and anxiety at His absence. Impossible that such could be the case. It is not a reproach, but a respectful and gentle explanation, that Jesus gives. It is a child justifying himself for conduct that at first sight appears so strange. Jesus seems to say: "Is it possible I could have left you had not the glory of my Heavenly Father demanded it? No obligation less powerful, less sacred, could ever have withdrawn me from your loving presence: *Nesciebatis, Did you not know it?*"

When the glory of God requires it, forsake all sacrifice, even your warmest and most lawful affections.

*Watchword.* — Seek first the glory of God.

### 29. *Success in Missions.*

Père Antoine Natal, of the Society of Jesus, had a great devotion to Saint Joseph, and published a book in honour of the Saint. Unwearied in his missionary labours, he ensured their success by plac-

ing them under the patronage of Saint Joseph, and offered him daily homage by the recitation of a chapter of prayer he had composed in honour of the Saint.

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### 30th Meditation.

“Is not this the carpenter’s Son?”—SAINT MATTHEW xiii. 55.

“Is not this the carpenter?”—SAINT MARK vi. 3.

“Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?”—SAINT JOHN vi. 42.

These appellations meet with no objections on the part of Jesus. Enough has been said by Him to show that God is His real Father ; but Joseph, being His Heavenly Father’s representative, Spouse of Mary and head of the Family, Jesus acknowledges him as His adopted father. He heeds not being called the carpenter’s son ; there is nothing in that to humiliate or give offence. Joseph is no man for whom to blush.

These words, the last mention of Saint

Joseph in the Gospel, show forth his most glorious title, his greatness, and his virtue. His greatness, for he fills the office of father to Jesus; his virtue, for he is worthy of this dignity, and Jesus is content to pass as Joseph's son.

Remain in the sphere in which Providence has placed you. Follow the example of Joseph. The glory of Jesus shines forth the brighter for Joseph's humility. Had our Lord's adopted father been a man of learning and position, we should have marvelled the less at the wondrous words that proceeded from his lips.

God's share in our actions is but rendered the more conspicuous by the lowliness of our position and the mediocrity of our talents. But, as with Joseph, so with us; and though we are but the instrument, and to God is due all the glory, some portion of it will be reflected on us.

*Watchword.*—Fulfil the duties of your state, and by so doing you will glorify God.

30. *Saint Joseph and the Papal Zouave.*

Joseph le Saige de la Villebrune, lieutenant in the Papal army, had a tender devotion to Saint Joseph, and was not forgotten by the Saint. As his last hour drew nigh, he sent for the chaplain, saying : Saint Joseph bids me confess at once, as I have not a moment to lose. After hearing his confession, the chaplain announced that he was going to say Mass for the sick man, and would afterwards bring him the Holy Communion. Just as the chaplain was about to ascend the steps of the altar, Saint Joseph sent to say that there was no time to be lost ; he recited aloud the prayers for Communion, thanking God for permitting him to retain his consciousness so long. When he had finished praying his delirium returned, but even then he opened his eyes only to turn them towards the image of the Saint ; he even wished to throw himself on his knees before his holy patron, saying to the sisters, when they tried to persuade him to lie down again : " Give me my clothes quickly ; do

you not see that Saint Joseph is waiting for me ?”

On the morrow, about three o'clock in the morning, he opened his eyes, fixed them on his patron, and gently passed away.

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### 31st Meditation.

“ And was subject unto them.”—SAINT LUKE ii. 51.

Jesus yields obedience to Saint Joseph and the order of things seem reversed. Henceforth, what pretext will you find to dispense you from obeying? But I am wiser and better than is he who is placed over me as my superior. That may be, or it may not be so. The wisdom and sanctity of Jesus are incomparable, and yet Joseph commands and Jesus obeys.

Joseph commands Jesus ! Kings have but men for their subjects. Joseph is more than king ; true that but one subject forms his empire, but this subject is

King of kings, and King of Angels, the God made man : *Et erat subditus illis.*

Joseph is surpassed by none ! Placed between God and man, interpreter and instrument of the Divinity. Joseph, as prophet, transmits the divine message to people and kings. As being, in a certain sense, intermediary between God the Father and God the Son, Joseph is interpreter and instrument of the Eternal Father, and transmits the divine commands not to kings or nations but to Him who is the Monarch of all !

Can the sacerdotal dignity equal that of Joseph ? From the throne of truth itself, Peter, living and infallible in the person of his successors, pronounces on faith, on morals. Prophet and king, the Holy Father teaches and commands ; no earthly dignity so great as his, no function so sublime, save that of Joseph. Joseph speaks ; and He who is power and wisdom, Jesus, the God Incarnate, obeys.

In heaven the saints do not lose the privileges granted to them on earth. Whilst here below, Joseph commanded

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Jesus; in heaven he turns his suppliant gaze on Jesus, and at once his prayers are answered. On earth Jesus obeyed Joseph, in heaven He forestalls his adopted father's slightest wish.

Have recourse, then, to Joseph.—*Ite ad Joseph.* He is all-powerful with Jesus.

*Watchword.*—Do God's will, and God will strengthen yours.

### 31. *St. Joseph's Power with our Lord.*

Catherine de Saint-Augustin, hospital-sister in Quebec, beheld in vision, on the Feast of the Ascension, our Lord's entry into heaven. St. Joseph took precedence of the saints of the Old Testament. It was he who presented the King of Glory to his Eternal Father. Our Lord at the same time declared that in heaven He would continue to do the will of His adopted father.

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### Saint Joseph and the Sacred Heart.

Picture to yourself Saint Joseph bearing in one hand a lily—symbol of chastity—and with the other pointing out the Infant Jesus, who is standing on the knees of His adopted father. The Divine Child points to St. Joseph, and from His smiling lips seem to issue these words written beneath the picture: “He has carried Me in his arms, pressed Me to his heart, maintained Me by his labour—what can I refuse him?” If a momentary repose on the heart of our Lord transformed Saint John into the Apostle of Love, what must it have been with him who, in loving embrace, so often held the Divine Child pressed closely to his heart?

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### Pius IX. and Saint Joseph.

Above the *prie-Dieu* of the Holy Father was a beautiful picture representing Saint Joseph with the Infant Jesus in his arms.



The Divine Child reveals His heart, and seems to pronounce the words inscribed beneath the picture : *Ite ad Joseph*—Go to Joseph.

It was here, at the feet of Saint Joseph, that the Vicar of Christ commended the Universal Church to the care of the Divine Child.

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### Decree of Pius IX.

In the same way that God established Joseph, the son of the Patriarch Jacob, Governor of all the land of Egypt, in order to insure to the people the necessary means of subsistence, so when the times were fulfilled for the Eternal Father to send His only Son to redeem the world, He chose another Joseph, of whom the first was the type ; He made him lord and master of His house and His goods, and elected him as guardian of His principal treasures. And Joseph was espoused to the Immaculate Virgin Mary, from whom, by the power of the Holy Ghost, was born our Lord Jesus Christ, who deigned to be

reputed the Son of Joseph, and was subject unto him. And He, whom so many kings and prophets had desired to see, Joseph not only beheld, but conversed with Him, held Him in his arms with paternal affection, embraced Him, watched with care over His maintenance, and provided for the nurture of Him, who was to be the spiritual nourishment of His faithful people, and the bread of eternal life.

In consequence of this sublime dignity conferred by God on His most faithful servant, the Church has always held Saint Joseph in the highest honour, after the Most Holy Virgin, his spouse; has continually sung his praises, and has had recourse to him, by preference, in her greatest distress. And as in these sad days the Church is assailed on all sides by her enemies, and oppressed by such misfortunes that the impious are persuaded that the time is come when the gates of hell shall prevail against her, the venerable bishops of the entire Catholic world have humbly prayed the Sovereign Pontiff, in their name and in that of all the faithful confided to their care, to deign to declare

Saint Joseph patron of the Catholic Church. This petition having been renewed with still greater urgency at the time of the Œcumenical Vatican Council, our Holy Father Pius IX., profoundly moved at the late deplorable events, and wishing to place himself and all the faithful in a special manner under the all-powerful patronage of the holy Patriarch Saint Joseph, has deigned to grant the petition of the venerable Bishops. For this reason he has solemnly declared Saint Joseph Patron of the Catholic Church ; he has decreed that the Feast of this Saint, on the 19th of March, should be henceforth raised to the position of a double of the first class, though without octave, on account of Lent. He has also prescribed that the declaration thus made by the present decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites should be published on the day consecrated to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God, the spouse of the most chaste Saint Joseph ; whatever to the contrary notwithstanding.

*The 8th December of the year 1870.*

### St. Theresa and St. Joseph.

I have chosen as advocate and intercessor the glorious Saint Joseph, and recommend myself constantly to his protection. . . . I never remember having asked from him any favour that he has not granted.

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### Prayers to St. Joseph.

Recite daily one of the prayers, and meditate on one of the following subjects:—

*1st Day.*—As Saint John Baptist, so too was Saint Joseph sanctified from his mother's womb.—*Gerson.*

*2d Day.*—I regard as pious and correct the opinion of those who consider that in merit and greatness Saint Joseph far excels all other saints.—*Suarez.*

*3d Day.*—God has reunited in St. Joseph all the light and splendour of the other saints.—*Saint Gregory de Nazianzum.*

*4th Day.*—Of all men, Saint Joseph was the only one selected to co-operate in carrying out the grandest work of the Divinity.

*5th Day.*—Even as Our Lady was “blessed among women,” so Saint Joseph was blessed among men.—*Navæus.*

*6th Day.*—He was greater than Patriarchs or Prophets, for he was the spouse of Our Lady and foster father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Tolet.*

*7th Day.*—He was head of God’s family on earth, the first disciple of our Lord, most exact imitator of His virtues, first in the confidence of Jesus and of Mary, and under the new covenant, the first to suffer persecution for righteousness’ sake.—*Rupert.*

*8th Day.*—His purity equalled that of the highest angels.—*Saint Francis de Sales.*

*9th Day.*—Only after death, the other Saints enjoy the felicity of Heaven ; Joseph, happier than they, possesses God even on earth, and the Divine Child is dependent on his loving care.—*Rupert.*

*Close of Novena.*—When a husband or a father entreats, such entreaty is a command to wife or child; therefore take Saint Joseph as your patron, friend, and most powerful intercessor.—*Gerson.*

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### Prayers to Saint Joseph.

Let us address Saint Joseph in the words of the Angel:—"Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."—SAINT MATTHEW i. 20.

Let us address Saint Joseph in the words of the Church:—"We beseech Thee, O Lord, that we may be assisted by the merits of the spouse of Thy most holy Mother, that what of ourselves we are unable to obtain, may be given us by his intercession."

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*FOR PRIESTS.*

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**Prayers to Saint Joseph.**

O felicem virum, beatum Joseph, cui datum est Deum, quem multi reges voluerunt videre et non viderunt, audire et non audierunt, non solum videre et audire, sed portare, deosculari, vestire et custodire.

*V.* Ora pro nobis, beate Joseph.

*R.* Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

(An indulgence of one year to priests who  
recite this prayer before Mass.)

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**Post Missam et per Diem.**

Virginum custos et pater, sancte Joseph, cujus fideli custodiæ ipsa innocentia Christus Jesus, et Virgo virginum Maria commissa fuit: te per hoc utrumque charissimum pignus, Jesum et Mariam, obsecro et obtestor, ut me ab omni immunditia præservatum, mente incontaminata, puro corde,

et casto corpore, Jesu et Mariæ semper  
facias castissime famulari. Amen.

(An indulgence of one year to priests each  
time they recite this prayer.)

Holy Joseph, father and protector of  
virgins, faithful guardian to whom God  
confided Jesus, Innocence itself, and Mary,  
the Virgin of Virgins, by this twofold trea-  
sure I implore Thee to preserve me pure  
in body and in soul, so that I may serve  
Jesus and Mary in perfect chastity. Amen.

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### Memorare to Saint Joseph.

Remember, O most holy Joseph, that  
never was it known that any one who fled  
to thy protection, implored thy help and  
sought thy intercession, was left unaided.  
Inspired with this confidence, I come to  
thee, O Foster-Father of the Word Incar-  
nate. Despise not my petitions, but in  
thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Indulgence of 300 days.—Pius IX. 1869.

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### Litany of Saint Joseph.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven,

*Have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

*Have mercy on us.*

God the Holy Ghost,

*Have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, one God,

*Have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, Spouse of Saint Joseph, *pray  
for us.*

Holy Joseph, son of David,

Saint Joseph, chaste Spouse of the  
Virgin Mary,

Saint Joseph, Guardian of the Holy  
Family,

Saint Joseph, nursing Father of  
Jesus,

Saint Joseph, Protector of Jesus and  
and Mary,

*Pray for us.*

Saint Joseph, humble artisan,  
 Saint Joseph, good and faithful ser-  
 vant,  
 Saint Joseph, whom God declared just,  
 Saint Joseph, humble imitation of  
 Jesus and Mary,  
 Saint Joseph, proved by God,  
 Saint Joseph, ever submissive to the  
 Divine Will,  
 Saint Joseph, model of humility,  
 Saint Joseph, Spotless Lily,  
 Saint Joseph, Patron of the Interior  
 or hidden life,  
 Saint Joseph, Help of the Church,  
 Saint Joseph, dispenser of grace,  
 Saint Joseph, our Protector,  
 Saint Joseph, who didst die in the  
 arms of Jesus and Mary,  
 Saint Joseph, aid of the dying,  
 Saint Joseph, patron of a happy  
 death,  
 Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of  
 the world,  
*Spare us, O Lord!*  
 Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of  
 the world,  
*Graciously hear us, O Lord!*

Pray for us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of  
the world,

*Have mercy on us !*

Christ hear us.

Christ graciously hear us.

V. Pray for us, Saint Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the  
promises of Christ.

*Let us pray.*

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that  
we may be assisted by the merits of the  
spouse of thy most Holy Virgin Mother,  
that what of ourselves we cannot obtain,  
may be granted us through His interces-  
sion. Who livest and reignest with the  
Father and the Holy Ghost, world without  
end. Amen.

#### THE THREE INVOCATIONS.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my  
heart, my soul, and my life.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, assist me in my  
last agony.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, may I die in peace  
in your most holy company.

100 days' indulgence each time.















